<u>IN THE SPECIFICATION</u>:

Applicant, pursuant to revised 37 C.F.R. § 1.121, submits the following amendments to the Specification:

Please *substitute* the following Title for the corresponding Title on page 1:

--ALTERNATIVE RANKING ACCORDING TO EXPERT-ASSIGNED BIAS VALUES--

Additionally, please *substitute* the following SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION for that beginning of page 8 and extending through page 12:

--The inventive methods and apparatus obviate the necessity of large statistical data bases, contemporaneous experts and classic inference engines in the configuration of an expert system for ranking of alternatives according to likelihood.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a method for ranking a set of alternatives according to likelihood, comprising: configuring, in one or a plurality of electronic databases stored in a storage device of a computer (or of a server), a set of alternatives, a query set comprising at least one a query, and a set of primary bias values, wherein each primary bias value is associated with a particular alternative of the set of alternatives, and reflects at least one human expert's prior conception of the degree of predictive value of the query for the particular alternative relative to others; inputting a user's response to the query into the computer; and ranking, using a software program stored on the storage device that is operative with a processor of the computer to receive and process the user's response, the alternatives according to relative likelihood, based at least in part on the set of primary bias values.

Preferably, ranking the set of alternatives further comprises querying the one or more electronic databases to generate at least one secondary bias value that is based on the corresponding primary bias value and the response to the query, wherein each secondary bias value is associated with a particular alternative of the set of alternatives, and reflects the expert prior conception of the

degree of predictive value of the query and response for the particular alternative relative to others, and wherein ranking is based, at least in part, on the secondary bias values, or at least in part on a combination of the primary and secondary bias values. Preferably, generating the secondary bias values involves increasing, decreasing or conserving the corresponding primary bias values based on the response to the query. Preferably, the query set comprises a plurality of queries, wherein ranking the alternatives involves summing and averaging of at least one of primary and secondary bias values. Preferably, generating secondary bias values, and ranking the alternatives is achieved, at least in part, by using algorithm 42 (ELICIT^{TM}).

Preferably, the set of alternatives is a set of alternate medical diagnoses or conditions, wherein the expert is a medical expert, wherein ranking the alternatives provides a list of alternate medical diagnoses or conditions, ranked according to likelihood.

Additionally provided is a computer apparatus, and a computer network apparatus for implementing the inventive methods, locally or over a wide-area network.--